What does it mean to sign up?

Awareness:

- Circulate information from the **Armed Forces Support Network** within your community by both social media and by distributing posters, or including in newsletters if you have one) in community spaces like village halls and notice boards.
    - HIVE - circulate posters to encourage people to attend.
    - Survey – raise awareness and encourage the armed forces community to feedback – make a link from your website/social media (this is on our website Forest of Dean Armed Forces Support Network - Forest of Dean District Council
    - If your community has a parish magazine forwarding this information to them for inclusion
    - Check to see if there are any Community Advice First Aiders in your community (ethan.ruskin@gloscab.org.uk)

Business:

- Encourage business in your parish or town to sign up to the covenant by signposting them to ArmedForces.Network@fdean.gov.uk .
- *There are lots of business who employ veterans in the district but what veterans tell us is that there are many veterans who struggle to get interviews.*
- *Key benefits of employing a veteran can be good time keeping, works well as part of a team, good at taking instructions….*
- We are looking for businesses to work with us to develop this. Are there businesses in your community who you know who you could signpost to us?
- Are businesses in your community prepared to get involved in the veteran's discount card to offer Veterans in the Forest a discount? Official Armed Forces Veteran's Discount Card

Activities:

Do events in your community to celebrate Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Day and let the AFSN know and raise awareness of HIVE/Survey etc

Funding:

FODDC has commissioned support via Wildeearth Jouney's to enable a monthly HIVE.

If your parish or Town council has funding could you help fund something in your community or could you work with the AFSN to secure more funding by ringfencing match.

How the HIVE is Supporting the Armed Forces Community

The HIVE has delivered practical support, community engagement and improved access to services for veterans, service leavers and military families across the Forest of Dean.

- Brings support partner agencies and charities together in one accessible location.
- Provides opportunities to connect with like-minded people and reconnect with former comrades.
- Helps reduce social isolation and gives purpose to those wishing to volunteer within their community.
- Listens to members' feedback and organises activities such as archery, shooting sessions and group trips.
- Works with GP surgeries to raise awareness of veterans' needs and encourages veterans to identify themselves to their medical professionals.
- Helped a veteran living with dementia access transport for hospital appointments.
- Supported service leavers in navigating complex housing application processes.
- Helped several veterans access food support through local Foodbanks and The Salvation Army.
- Assisted a veteran in obtaining essential mobility aids.
- Signposts individuals to benefits, pensions and financial advice services.
- Supported a veteran volunteer in completing their DBS application.
- Worked with Citizens Advice to help ensure veterans receive priority support.
- Helped veterans access the Veterans Card, Blue Light Card and other support schemes.
- Engages with local businesses, parish councils and town councils to encourage sign-up to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Works closely with Beachley Barracks to provide support for service personnel and military families.